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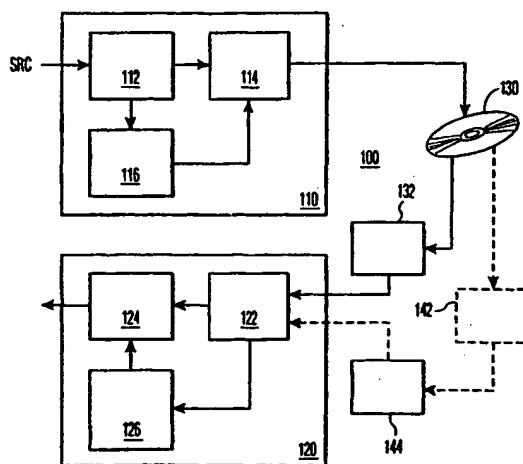
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(54) Title: PROTECTING CONTENT FROM ILLICIT REPRODUCTION



(57) **Abstract:** A sufficient number of data items are selected (112) for inclusion in a data set so as to discourage a transmission of the entire set over a limited bandwidth communications path (130), such as the Internet. Each data item comprises one or more sections, which taken together constitute the complete data set. Each section of the data set is linked to another section of the data set, and each section's link is bound to the section via the use of one or more watermarks. Upon presentation of material for rendering, the presence of the entirety of the data set is verified (126) by ascertaining the presence of linked-to sections. For further security, the links between sections is formed by a random selection of each linked-to section. To verify that each linked-to section corresponds to the original section that was linked-to, each link contains an identifier of the linked-to section that can be used to determine that a retrieval of a linked-to section corresponds to the originally assigned linked-to section. If the identifier associated with the linked-to section does not properly match the presented linked-to section, a rendering of the data items of the data set is prevented. In a preferred embodiment, a closed linked list is formed, so that every section of the data set can be included in the verification process.

Protecting content from illicit reproduction

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates primarily to the field of consumer electronics, and in particular to the protection of copy-protected content material.

2. Description of Related Art

The illicit distribution of copyright material deprives the holder of the copyright legitimate royalties for this material, and could provide the supplier of this illicitly distributed material with gains that encourage continued illicit distributions. In light of the ease of information transfer provided by the Internet, content material that is intended to be copy-protected, such as artistic renderings or other material having limited distribution rights, are susceptible to wide-scale illicit distribution. The MP3 format for storing and transmitting compressed audio files has made the wide-scale distribution of audio recordings feasible, because a 30 or 40 megabyte digital audio recording of a song can be compressed into a 3 or 4 megabyte MP3 file. Using a typical 56 kbps dial-up connection to the Internet, this MP3 file can be downloaded to a user's computer in a few minutes. Thus, a malicious party could read songs from an original and legitimate CD, encode the songs into MP3 format, and place the MP3 encoded song on the Internet for wide-scale illegitimate distribution. Alternatively, the malicious party could provide a direct dial-in service for downloading the MP3 encoded song. The illicit copy of the MP3 encoded song can be subsequently rendered by software or hardware devices, or can be decompressed and stored onto a recordable CD for playback on a conventional CD player.

A number of schemes have been proposed for limiting the reproduction of copy-protected content material. The Secure Digital Music Initiative (SDMI) and others advocate the use of "digital watermarks" to identify authorized content material. EP 0981901 "Embedding auxiliary data in a signal" published 1 March 2000 discloses a technique for watermarking electronic material. As in its paper watermark counterpart, a digital watermark is embedded in the content material so as to be detectable, but unobtrusive. An audio playback of a digital music recording containing a watermark, for example, will be

substantially indistinguishable from a playback of the same recording without the watermark. A watermark detection device, however, is able to distinguish these two recordings based on the presence or absence of the watermark. Because some content material may not be copy-protected and hence may not contain a watermark, the absence of a watermark cannot be used
5 to distinguish legitimate from illegitimate material. On the contrary, the absence of a watermark is indicative of content material that can be legitimately copied freely.

Other copy protection schemes are also available. For example, European patent EP0906700, "Method and system for transferring content information and supplemental information related thereto", published 7 April 1999 presents a technique for
10 the protection of copyright material via the use of a watermark "ticket" that controls the number of times the protected material may be rendered.

An accurate reproduction of watermarked material will cause the watermark to be reproduced in the copy of the watermarked material. An inaccurate, or lossy reproduction of watermarked material, however, may not provide a reproduction of the watermark in the
15 lossy copy of the material. A number of protection schemes, including those of the SDMI, have taken advantage of this characteristic of lossy reproduction to distinguish legitimate material from illegitimate material, based on the presence or absence of an appropriate watermark. In the SDMI scenario, two types of watermarks are defined: "robust" watermarks, and "fragile" watermarks. A robust watermark is one that is expected to survive
20 a lossy reproduction that is designed to retain a substantial portion of the original content material, such as an MP3 encoding of an audio recording. That is, if the reproduction retains sufficient information to allow a reasonable rendering of the original recording, the robust watermark will also be retained. A fragile watermark, on the other hand, is one that is expected to be corrupted by a lossy reproduction or other illicit tampering.

25 In the SDMI scheme, the presence of a robust watermark indicates that the content material is copy protected, and the absence or corruption of a corresponding fragile watermark when a robust watermark is present indicates that the copy protected material has been tampered with in some manner. An SDMI compliant device is configured to refuse to render watermarked material with a corrupted watermark, or with a detected robust
30 watermark but an absent fragile watermark, except if the corruption or absence of the watermark is justified by an "SDMI-certified" process, such as an SDMI compression of copy protected material for use on a portable player. For ease of reference and understanding, the term "render" is used herein to include any processing or transferring of the content material, such as playing, recording, converting, validating, storing, loading, and the like.

minimize the likelihood of forgery, the entirety parameter is based on a hash of a composite of section-specific identifiers. The referenced copending application also teaches the use of digitally signed certificates and other techniques that rely on cryptographic techniques, such as hashing and the like.

5 In accordance with the invention herein, a self-referential data set is used that facilitates the determination of whether the entirety of the data set is present, without the use of out of band data and without the use of cryptographic functions, such as a hash function. If the entirety of the data set is not present, subsequent processing of the data items of the data set is terminated. In the context of digital audio recordings, a compliant playback or
10 recording device is configured to refuse to render an individual song in the absence of the entire contents of the CD. The time required to download an entire album on a CD in uncompressed digital form, even at DSL and cable modem speeds, can be expected to be greater than an hour, depending upon network loading and other factors. Thus, by requiring that the entire contents of the CD be present in uncompressed form, at a download "cost" of
15 over an hour, the likelihood of a theft of a song via a wide-scale distribution on the Internet is substantially reduced.

FIG. 1 illustrates an example block diagram of a protection system 100 in accordance with this invention. The protection system 100 comprises an encoder 110 that encodes content material onto a medium 130, and a decoder 120 that renders the content
20 material from the medium 130. The encoder 110 includes a selector 112 that selects content material from a source SRC, a binder 116 that builds an entirety verification structure, and a recorder 114 that records the content material onto the medium 130. The selector 112, for example, may be configured to select content material corresponding to songs that are being compiled into an album. For ease of reference, each selected content material item is termed
25 a "data item", and the entirety of the data items forms a "data set". Each data item comprises one or more sections of data that form the data item, the totality of sections also forming the "data set". The binder 116 creates a data structure consisting of links between sections of the data set, by means of which the entirety of the data set can be verified. Preferably, each section's link is bound to the section via the use of one or more watermarks. The recorder 114
30 appropriately formats, encodes, and stores the data set, with the aforementioned data structure, on the medium 130, using techniques common in the art.

In accordance with this invention, the selector 112 selects data items to be added to the data set until the size of the data set is deemed large enough to discourage a subsequent transmission of the data set via a limited bandwidth communications channel.

This "discouraging size" is a subjective value, and will depend upon the assumed available communications bandwidth, the loss incurred by the transmission, and so on. Other criteria may also be used to determine whether to add additional data items to the data set. For example, if the data items correspond to songs of an existing album collection, all of the

- 5 songs will typically be added to the data set, regardless of whether the size of the data set has exceeded the determined discouraging size. If all of the songs of the album collection have been selected, and the discouraging size criterion has not yet been reached, other data items are selected to accumulate the required discouraging size. For example, data items comprising random data bits may be added to the data set to increase its size. These random
- 10 bits will typically be stored as out of band data, CD-ROM data, and the like, to prevent it from being rendered as audible sounds by a conventional CD player. Alternatively, the data items may comprise other sample songs that are provided to encourage the sale of other albums, or images and video sections related to the recorded content material. Similarly, promotional material, such as Internet access subscription programs may also be included in
- 15 the recorded information on the recorded medium. These and other means of adding size to a data set will be evident to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of this invention.

The decoder 120 in accordance with this invention comprises a renderer 122 and a gate 124 that is controlled by an entirety checker 126. The renderer 122 is configured to retrieve information from a medium reading device, such as a CD reader 132. As is common

20 in the art, the renderer 122 retrieves the information by specifying a location index, and in response, the reader 132 provides the data located at the specified location index on the medium 130. Block reads of data at contiguous locations on the medium 130 are effected by specifying a location index and a block size.

The dotted lines of FIG. 1 illustrate an example song extractor 142 that

25 extracts a song from the medium 130 and communicates it to an example CD imitator 144, representative of a possible illicit download of the song via the Internet. The CD imitator 144 represents, for example, a software program that provides information in response to a conventional CD-read command. Alternatively, the information received from the song extractor can be written to a CD medium, and provided to the conventional CD reader 132.

30 As noted above, the song extractor 142 is likely to be used because the transmission of the entirety of the contents of the medium 130 is assumed to be discouraged by the purposefully large size of the contents of the medium 130.

assigned to the linked-to section, as well as its link address and associated random number.

The random number associated with the linked-to section that is contained in the start section is compared with the random number contained in the linked-to section. If the random numbers are not equal, subsequent processing of data items in the data set, such as the rendering of a song, is terminated. As noted above, other linked-identifier techniques may also be used, such as storing a random number in one section, and a function, such as a hash, of this number in the linked-to section. If an alternative encoding scheme is used, the comparison is modified accordingly.

If the section-identifiers are found to be equivalent, the process continues, by advancing to the linked-to section. The above section-identifier matching is continued for each subsequent linked-to section, until sufficient confidence is gained that the entirety of the data set is present. In this embodiment, absolute confidence can be gained by continuing until the linked-to section becomes the original start section, indicating that all links in the closed linked list have been processed. The reading of each watermark, however, is time consuming, and a substantial delay before the rendering of a song may be unacceptable to consumers. In a preferred embodiment, the rendering of the song begins immediately after a few successful random number matches. Thereafter, if the rendering system is able to read information from the medium faster than is required for rendering the material, additional linked-to section watermarks are read and verified, and the rendering is terminated if and when a mis-match is found.

Other data structures and corresponding encoding and decoding processes will

be evident to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of this invention. FIG. 4 illustrates an alternative data structure 600 that uses randomly linked pairs of sections to verify the presence of an entirety of the data set. In FIG. 4, each section 620 has an associated linked-to section L 634 and an associated random number R 636. In this example alternative embodiment, the linked-to section 620' has a linked-to section L 634' that points back to the linked-from section 620. That is, the linked-to addresses L 634, 634' form a linked pair of sections 620, 620'. In this data structure, a common random number R 636 is assigned to each section of the linked pair of sections 620, 620'. To determine whether an entirety of the data set is present, randomly selected sections are tested by verifying that each section's random number is equal to the random number at its linked-to section. It is assumed herein that the range, or approximate range, of the section addresses can be determined, so that the first "randomly selected section" is a viable section on the recorded medium. For example, the table of contents of the medium may be used to determine the viable track addresses,

assuming that the table of contents has an embedded fragile watermark, or other security device, that can be used to determine the validity of the table of contents. If a range cannot be determined, the first randomly selected section will be from the track selected for rendering.

In this manner, if a malicious party uses a song extractor 142 (FIG. 1) to "rip" a song from a CD, and communicates it, in compressed or uncompressed form, via the Internet, a verification of the links will result in a "track-section not found" response from the CD reader 132 or CD imitator 144 for any link in the sections of the song that link to a section of another song in the original data set. If the CD imitator 144 substitutes a bogus section in response to this verification request, the bogus section will not contain the appropriate random number watermark, and the entirety checker 126 will preclude further renderings of the ripped song.

Regardless of whether the selected song is used to generate the first section for verification, absolute certainty that all sections are present can be achieved by maintaining a list of tested sections, and verification continued until all section-pairs are tested. This approach assumes that the range of the section addresses can be determined or estimated, so that a truncation of the data set can be detected. In the case of the selected song being used to initiate the verification, the range of the section addresses can be assumed to be continuous through the range of link addresses in the selected song. For example, if one of the link addresses is track 10, section 9, a verification of each section 0 through 9 of track 10 can be made, and a verification of section 0 of tracks 0 through 10 can be made. These and other techniques for filling in a search area will be evident to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of this disclosure.

In a preferred embodiment, to minimize the time required to effect the determination that the entirety of the data set is present, random section pairs are tested until sufficient confidence is gained to justify the determination, with substantial statistical certainty. That is, for example, if only half the data set is actually present, the random selection of the first section, from within the total range of all sections, is likely to detect an absence of this section 50% of the time; if this section is present, the likelihood of its linked-to section being present is 50%. Thus, a successful pair-test provides 75% confidence that at least half the data set is present. Each successive test increases either the confidence level or the expected proportion of the data set being present, or both. Statistical tests are commonly available for determining an appropriate number of pair-test to achieve a desired level of confidence that a given proportion of the data set is present. In a typical embodiment, the

5. The method of claim 4, wherein creating the closed linked list includes a random selection.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein assigning the link address (230) to each section includes
5 selecting a random other section to link to the section via the link address (230).
7. The method of claim 1, further including:
10 assigning a verification parameter (332) to each section of the plurality of sections (220), to facilitate a subsequent verification that each section corresponding to each link address (230) is a valid section.
8. The method of claim 7, further including:
15 encoding the link address (230) of each section and the verification parameter (332) as one or more watermarks that are embedded in the section.
9. The method of claim 8, wherein
the one or more watermarks include:
20 a robust watermark that is configured such that a removal of the robust watermark causes a corruption of data contained in the section, and
a fragile watermark that is configured such that a modification of the data contained in the section causes a corruption of the fragile watermark.
10. A method of decoding content material from a source comprising:
25 reading one or more first entirety parameters (230, 332, 336) associated with a first section (220) of a data set,
the one or more first entirety parameters (230, 332, 336) comprising a link address (230) to a second section of the data set,
30 reading one or more second entirety parameters (230, 332, 336) associated with the second section of the data set, and
decoding subsequent sections of the data set in dependence upon the reading of the one or more second entirety parameters (230, 332, 336).

11. The method of claim 10, wherein
the one or more second entirety parameters (230, 332, 336) include a section
verification parameter (332), and
the decoding of the subsequent sections is dependent upon the section
5 verification parameter (332).
12. The method of claim 11, wherein
the section verification parameter (332) comprises a random number that is
associated with the second section when the data set is created.
- 10 13. The method of claim 10, further including
reading subsequent entirety parameters (230, 332, 336) associated with other
sections of the data set, based on the reading of the second entirety parameters (230, 332,
336),
15 wherein
the decoding of subsequent sections of the data set is in further dependence
upon the reading of the subsequent entirety parameters (230, 332, 336).
14. The method of claim 13, further including
20 determining when the reading of the subsequent entirety parameters (230, 332,
336) includes a completion of reading of all sections of the data set.
15. The method of claim 10, further including
rendering content material corresponding to the subsequent sections of the
25 data set.
16. The method of claim 10, wherein
the one or more second entirety parameters (230, 332, 336) are embedded in
the second section as one or more watermarks.
- 30 17. The method of claim 16, wherein
the one or more watermarks include:
a robust watermark that is configured such that a removal of the
robust watermark causes a corruption of data contained in the second section, and

a fragile watermark that is configured such that a modification of the data contained in the second section causes a corruption of the fragile watermark.

18. A storage medium (130) that is configured to contain content material, the

5 storage medium (130) comprising

a data structure (200, 300) that includes:

a plurality of sections (220), and

one or more entirety parameters (230, 332, 336) corresponding to each section of the plurality of sections (220),

10 wherein

the one or more entirety parameters (230, 332, 336) include a link address (230) that links the corresponding section to an other section of the plurality of sections (220) to facilitate a determination of whether an entirety of the plurality of sections (220) is present on a subsequent copy of at least a portion of the plurality of sections (220).

15

19. An encoder (110) comprising:

a selector (112) that is configured to select data items (210) comprising a data set so that an accumulated size of the data set is sufficient to discourage a transmission of the data set via a limited bandwidth communications channel,

20

each data item of the data items (210) comprising one or more sections (220),

a binder (116) that is configured to associate a link address (230) to each section of the data items (210) comprising the data set, the link address (230) corresponding to an other section of the data items (210) comprising the data set, and

25

a recorder (114) that is configured to record each section and each associated link address (230) to a medium (130) to facilitate a subsequent rendering of the data items (210) in dependence upon a presence of one or more of the other sections of the data items (210) corresponding to the link address (230) of one or more sections (220) of the data set.

30 20.

The encoder (110) of claim 19, wherein

the binder (116) is further configured to associate the link address (230) to each section via a random process.

21. The encoder (110) of claim 19, wherein

the binder (116) is further configured to associate a section verification parameter (332) to each section, and

the recorder (114) is further configured to record the section verification parameter (332) with each section to facilitate a verification that the section is present in the subsequent rendering of the data items (210).

22. The encoder (110) of claim 19, wherein the binder (116) associates the section verification parameter (332) to each section based on a random process.

10

23. A decoder (120) comprising:
a renderer (122) that is configured to receive data items (210) corresponding to a data set, and to produce therefrom a rendering corresponding to a select data item, each data item of the data items (210) including one or more sections (220), thereby forming a plurality of sections (220) comprising the data set, each section of the plurality of sections (220) including a link address (230) corresponding to an other section of the data set, and an entirety checker (126), operably coupled to the renderer (122), that is configured to preclude the rendering corresponding to the select data item in dependence upon a presence of one or more of the other sections corresponding to the link address (230) of one or more sections (220) of the plurality of sections (220).

24. The decoder (120) of claim 23, wherein the entirety checker (126) is further configured to determine the presence of all other sections corresponding to the link address (230) of all sections of the plurality of sections (220).

25. The decoder (120) of claim 23, wherein the entirety checker (126) is further configured to verify the presence of the one or more other sections based on a verification parameter (332) that is associated with each section.

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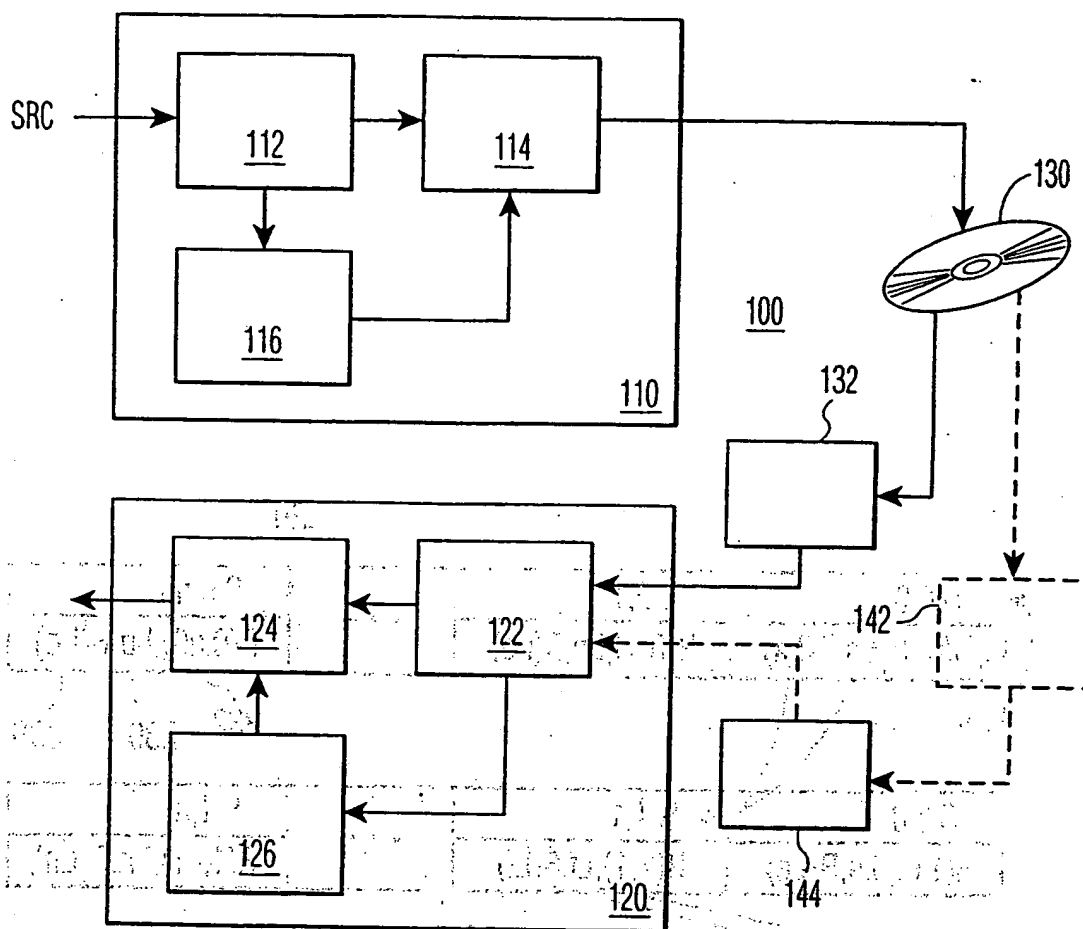


FIG. 1

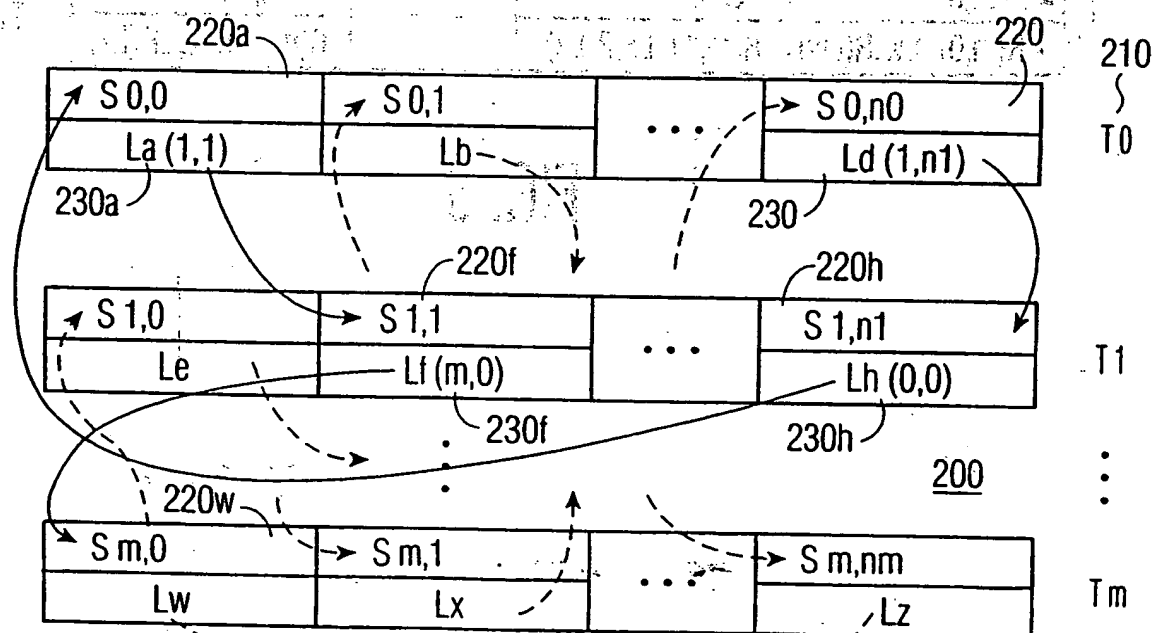


FIG. 2

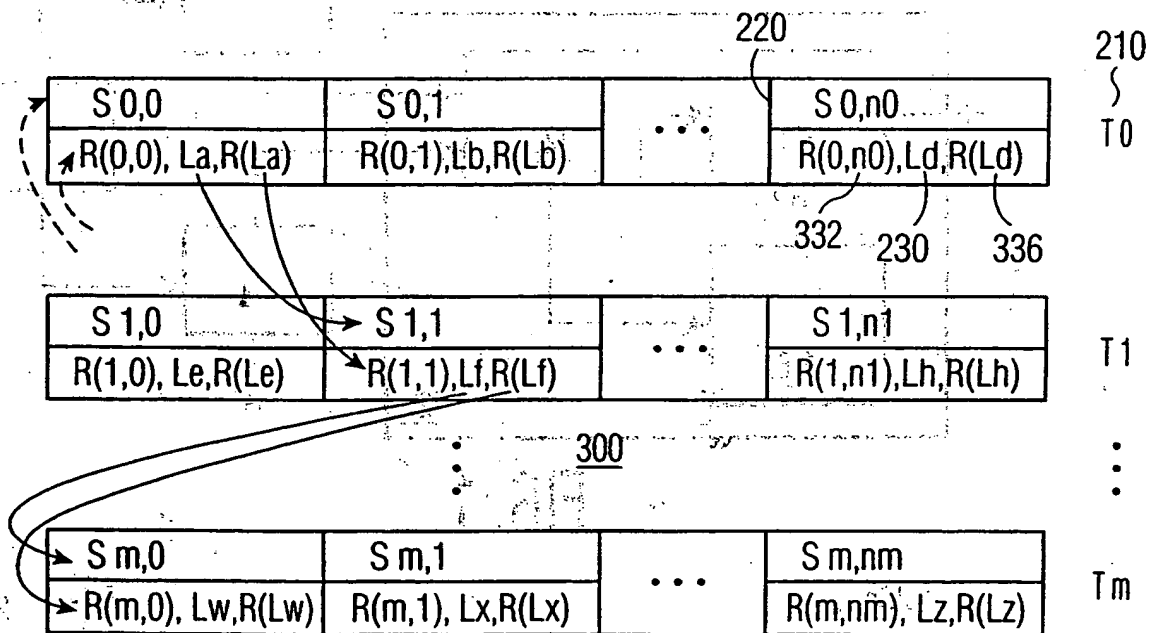


FIG. 3

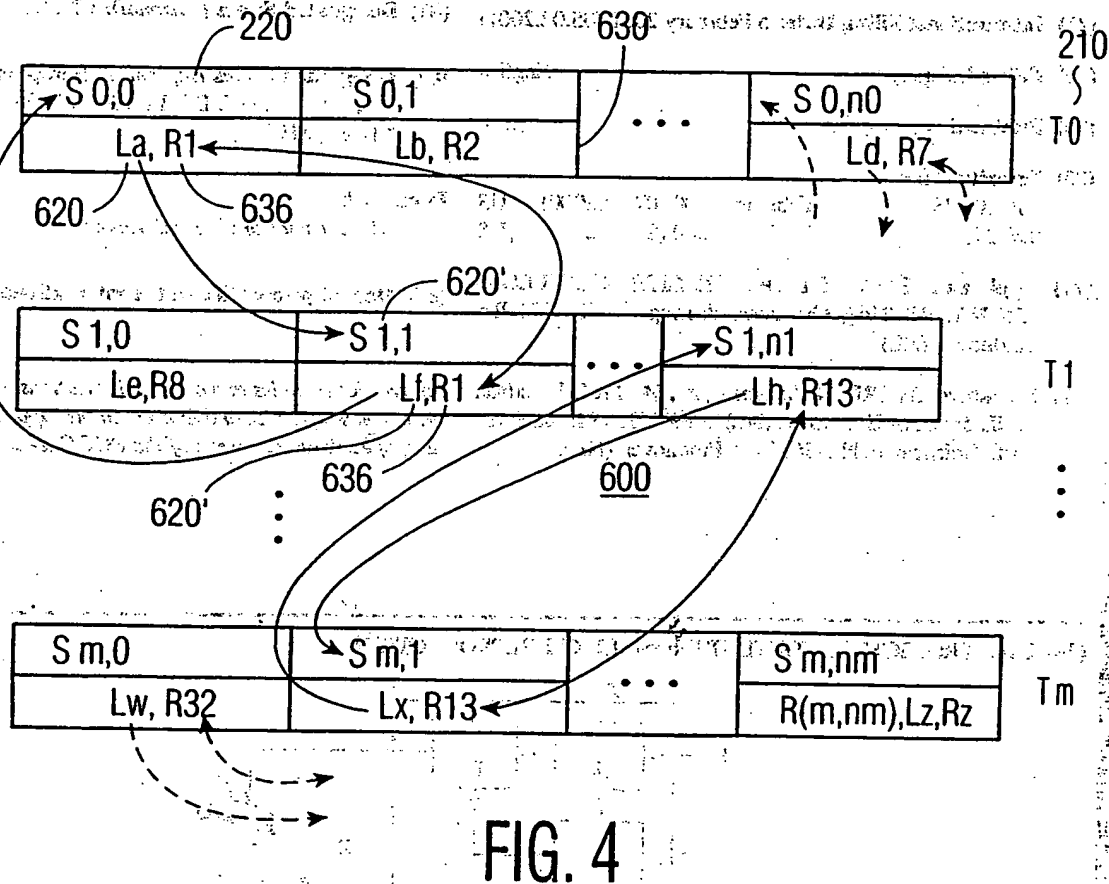


FIG. 4

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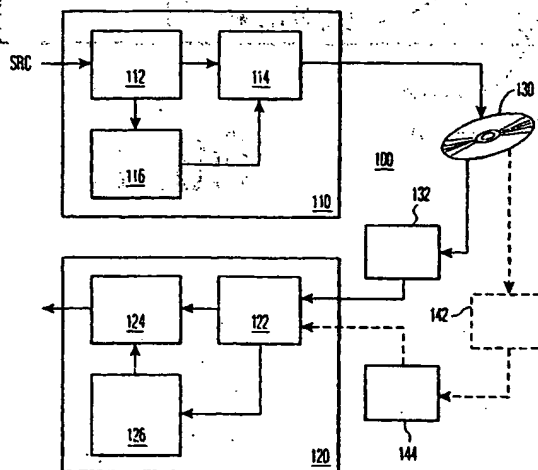
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

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According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 G11B G06F

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ, IBM-TDB, COMPENDEX, INSPEC

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 99 45704 A (KONINKL PHILIPS ELECTRONICS NV ; MAES MAURICE J J J B (NL); PHILIPS) 10 September 1999 (1999-09-10) the whole document	1, 10, 18, 19, 23
A	MAES M ET AL: "EXPLOITING SHIFT INVARIANCE TO OBTAIN A HIGH PAYLOAD IN DIGITAL IMAGE WATERMARKING" PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIMEDIA COMPUTING AND SYSTEMS, June 1999 (1999-06), pages 7-12, XP000939264 Eindhoven, The Netherlands the whole document	1-3, 10, 18, 19, 23

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☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Interr. nal Application No

PCT/EP 01/01207

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>EP 0 840 513 A (NIPPON ELECTRIC CO) 6 May 1998 (1998-05-06)</p> <p>abstract column 3, line 40 - column 4, line 20 column 6, line 1 - column 7, line 22 column 10, line 13 - column 12, line 4 claims 1, 11; figure 2</p>	<p>1-3, 7, 9-11, 15, 18, 19, 23</p>
A, P	<p>WO 00/39953-A (KENT RIDGE DIGITAL LABS ; SUN QIBIN (SG); WU JIANKANG (SG); DENG HU) 6 July 2000 (2000-07-06)</p> <p>abstract page 2, line 22 - page 4, line 24 page 6, line 16 - page 7, line 7 page 9, line 11 - line 18 page 10, line 11 - page 11, line 17 page 12, line 5 - line 22 page 14, line 4 - line 19 claims 1-3; figures 2, 3</p>	<p>1, 2, 4, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 23</p>

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Information on patent family members

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